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ABSTRACT

The author begins this paper by explaining that in examining 10 works by Ann De Vaney his goal is to see what her writing generally reveals about her playing close attention to people-to research subjects, to subjects otherwise addressed in the works, to readers of her works. The author attempts to address each by asking basic questions: (1) What is the work about, and what are her (and any co-author's) intent and methodology? (2) Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses? and (3) What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests? The following general answers to the guiding questions emerge from the analysis of the 10 works studied. De Vaney writes about 10 different topics which include: aptitude-treatment-interaction and media; teaching critical responses to photographs; a field shift to post-structural and reader reception theories; rules that constitute knowing in the field; how to read the structures of educational television; sexism and racism in educational television programming; the diminishing of children by television programs; degradation of the subject by television ads; a post-structural history reading of the field and the struggle by women in the field; and the need for a postmodern philosophy of educational technology. In many of the works examined, the primary audience is Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) convention goers-researchers, professors, graduate students, and possibly some school media specialists. Otherwise, her audience is educational technology researchers, theorists, and academics generally. The specifics of De Vaney's works change from writing to writing, though they stay within the field of educational technology. After a very short time, her work is more foundational and philosophic in that it seeks wisdom as it deals with very basic issues, and the pieces get stronger. The work is somewhat more subversive over time; it asks readers to resist convention and change the cultural makeup of the field. (Contains 11 references.) (AEF)

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Professor Ann De Vaney and A Good Conversation

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Introduction

The first time I met Professor Ann De Vaney (Becker), she listened well to a paper I presented at a conference. She listened attentively, and doing so is one of the very best qualities of a good academic. So, when given the chance to review her work and write a paper for this symposium, I wondered if this quality of active or good listening is somehow present in her written works. And if something like good listening is evident, how does it manifest itself? So I acquired written works from throughout her career, starting with her dissertation and ending with an end-of-the 20th century work.

My goal is not primarily to examine De Vaney's intended ideas so much as it is simply to see what her writing generally reveals in terms of something like good listening. I don't want to take the works solely at face value but to look into them to see if I can find her paying close attention to people—to research subjects, to subjects otherwise addressed in the works, even perhaps to readers of her works. So, I gathered and read the ten works listed below. They were available from my own library, from ERIC, and from Dissertation Abstracts.

The Works

- *Verbal Ability and Visual Verbal Modes of Presentation in the Acquisition of a Poetic Concept (1974)*
- "A Model for Critical Dialogue: A Study for Enhancing Student Response to Visuals" (1982, with Robert, Roberto, Muffoletto)
- "Reader Theories, Cognitive Theories and Educational Media Research" (1985)
- "Rules of Evidence" (1990)
- "A Grammar of Educational Television" (1991)
- "Square One Television and Gender" (1991, with Alejandra Elenes)
- "Reading Educational Computer Programs" (1993)
- "Introduction: Background to Channel One" (1994)
- "Voices of the Founders: Early Discourses in Educational Technology" (1996, with Rebecca Butler)
- "Can and Need Educational Technology Become a Postmodern Enterprise?" (1998)

Method

At first, I wanted to see if, in her written works, professor De Vaney "listens" to people as well as she had listened to me at the annual Meeting of the Association of Educational Communications and Technology in 1986. Of course, I knew that a typical or literal meaning for "listen" was not good enough; I was *reading* her work. After casting about for the concept that best means the quality I was investigating, and after considering "hearing," "listening," and various communication models, I decided simply to look for instances when, in writing, she appears to attend to people's interests in some way. Attending to another person is what we do in a good face-to-face conversation. We pay attention to people and respond based, partly anyway, on their interests, intentions, needs, and so on.

This line of thinking led me to try to understand her work by asking a rather straightforward set of questions. I wanted to start by first simply asking what each work is about, but early on, I realized that the questions being devised were emanating from the kinds of post-structural, reader, and reception theories Ann uses in her work. She (1985) says, "Meaning can only be understood as what the individual intends. It is, therefore, the individual's intentions which produce the specific relations of differences or similarities..." (p. 10). So, I ask not only what a piece is about but what she means and/or intends. Why is she writing about something? This question necessitates examining the way in which she proceeds with her work--her methodology.

Professor De Vaney says (1985), too, that in post-structural theory we need to be aware that, in discourse, certain audiences are included and "space for certain viewers [audiences], is excluded" (p. 11). So, I ask about whom, in terms of her apparent audiences, she includes and/or excludes.

Further, people and knowledge are continually changing. As De Vaney says (1985), "knowledge accrues" (p. 3). So I look for what, if anything, changes in her writing over time and in terms of the foregoing quest

So, I attempt to address each work by asking basic questions:

1. What is the work about, and what are her (and any co-author's) intent and methodology?

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2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?
3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests?

Analysis of the Works

Please note that Professor De Vaney has co-authors on three of the works examined here. So, in the case of those three works, the reader should not assume that what emerges or what I say is totally attributable to Ann. Of course, a reader shouldn't assume that anyway, given what we are about to learn from Ann's work.

• *Verbal Ability and Visual Verbal Modes of Presentation in the Acquisition of a Poetic Concept (Becker, Ann De Vaney, 1974)*

1. What is the work about, and what are her intent and methodology?

This first work is Professor De Vaney's dissertation. She writes that, "The main objective of this study was to determine interaction between verbal aptitude and visual-verbal modes of presentation in the teaching of a concept" (p. 3) so as to help media designers and teachers.

The concept is "poetic metaphor," and the modes of presentation are: printed verbal, printed verbal with still pictures, spoken verbal, and spoken verbal with still pictures. She also is interested in the interaction of these modes with subjects' verbal aptitudes. Measures were taken on two dependent variables, comprehension and learning retention.

She concludes that, "one strong result emerged. The sound/still picture treatment (that is, the slide tape presentation) was superior to print, print/still pictures, and sound" (p. 70) "especially for low verbal ability students" (p. 71).

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

Her audience clearly is primarily her dissertation committee. Academics/researchers, instructional designers, and teachers are a primary, intended audience. Learners are included but only as research subjects and not directly as an audience. Research subjects and readers are treated reasonably. That is, she writes in an expository (empirical, logical, rational) style.

She studies the verbal abilities of people, which implies attending to or listening to people. She works closely with people in terms of learning and communicative ability (print verbal ability).

The study is experimental and quantitative, which indicates that it is less attentive to the subjects. Given the writing style, the audience and subjects are held at arm's length, so their best interests probably are not being served as well as they might.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

Of course, this is the first work studied, so nothing has changed. It is a typical, rational, empirical, expository, third person study and writing from the 1970s. It is what is or was expected in a dissertation.

• "A Model for Critical Dialogue: A Study for Enhancing Student Response to Visuals" (with Robert Muffoletto, 1982)

1. What is the work about, and what are her (and any co-author's) intent and methodology?

The authors try "to explore the effectiveness of a pedagogic strategy which involved the development of descriptive tactics and individual exploration into the meanings and significance of photographic images. It was hoped that the study would reveal methods which enhanced student responses toward photographs, their production, function and value in educational and culutral [sic] settings" (p. 3).

Students took photos and discussed them, guided by categories provided by De Vaney and Muffoletto: judgment, formal or visual, poetic, and political. Each week for six weeks, students were shown a different Diane Arbus' photo. After the first and last showings and without discussion, each student wrote responses about the photos. Student replies were used to form perceptual categories.

"The results of the study revealed a number of interesting considerations for teachers of media. The study suggested that by structuring the psychological learning environment conceptual shifts could occur. It also suggested that conceptualization in one activity could be crossed over to another activity which becomes an important consideration for educators when using media in their curriculum. The study also suggested that the development of a critical dialogue model for students might enhance verbal responses to photographs" (p. 8).

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

This work directly addresses attendees of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology: educational technology researchers, media specialists, graduate students, and so on. Other education researchers, academics, and teachers generally are a less direct audience. Again, students are subjects of the study and, in the usual tradition, are not directly addressed as an audience or as potential users of the results of the study. All study subjects and direct or potential audience members are treated quite reasonably. As is usually the case with academic reports, a certain rhetorical distance from the reader and student/subject is present.

Given that Ann is interested in enhancing student conceptual responses to photographs, students are treated as capable learners, thinkers, and conversationalists.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology. Compared to the first work, Dr. De Vaney pays greater attention to university students and to how they conceive of and think about photographs. She works directly with them to help them be more thoughtful. She expects learners to be more critical, in the sense that they are rational. However, she does not write directly *for* or *to* students. The work is about them.

• "Reader Theories, Cognitive Theories and Educational Media Research" (1985)

1. What is the work about, and what are her intent and methodology?

This paper is, in part, an exposition of theories that have conventionally guided research in educational/instructional technology. The paper also argues that the professional field should shift to structural and/or post-structural theories and investigations, especially in that structuralism "focuses on human acts...that involve cultural construction and the ways that speech acts involve sentences" (p. 3). Structuralism is interested in the meaning one intends to convey, and "knowledge accrues by perception of meaning, not by information processing...the relationship between the observer and the observed becomes primary. Knowledge...resides in the relationships which people construct and then perceive" (p. 3). "Meaning or understanding is generated by the learner not controlled by the technology or its designer" (p. 6). Post-structural theories go farther, emphasizing viewers and their construction of meaning, and "meaning can only be understood as what the individual intends" (p. 10).

She asks, "How would the learner [reader, student, colleague, writer] be perceived in post structural studies? Essentially, he/she would be understood as the subject...of the meaning, since he/she creates meaning from the text or media presentation...the learner is viewed as a social person belonging to a group, not as an individual person whose brain is the unit" (p. 10). So group construction of knowledge is studied. Conversely, messages may be encoded so that "space for certain viewers, is excluded. Yet, these exclusions may not be obvious to the designer. It is the viewer who has to tell us" (p. 11).

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

This work directly addresses attendees of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, though education and educational technology researchers, academics, theorists, and designers (and perhaps teachers) are likely to be a secondary audience, given the venue for the publication. Given that the piece is written in a mostly conventional academic fashion, the audience is treated reasonably. Here, too, learners are never directly an audience for her work, though we can surmise that learners are meant to be the ultimate receivers of the results of her work.

Even though the work is somewhat distanced from learners, Ann's meaningful attention to them is evident in this paper. After all, she views the learner "as a social person belonging to a group, not as an individual person whose brain is the unit."

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology. Because of whom she is addressing directly, she is attending again to the learner at a distance, but she writes as though learners have agency and voice and importance.

Here, Ann has left the realm of empirical/quantitative research and immerses herself in naturalistic investigations in education. But she goes beyond the mundane versions of most forms of so-called naturalistic inquiry and begins to show attraction to what I know as critical theory, which is concerned, at its best anyway, with the likes of human freedom, dignity, and social standing.

• "Rules of Evidence" (1990)

1. What is the work about, and what are her intent and methodology?

Ann writes that, "I will discuss whether the establishment of rules of evidence is possible or even necessary. An alternative framing of the question about rules of evidence is, 'How do researchers and practitioners in a specific field know what they know?' I will describe the concept of evidence in law and science. Specifically, I will show that the adoption of statistics as evidence in educational research was historically a clear misreading of the 'scientific method'" (p. 8).

She argues that education, as with the social science of law, is based in context and language and, so, cannot be value free and mechanistic. Instead, law and education research are activities in which evidence is collected and judged inductively not deductively. She goes beyond now common objections to applying many parts of the scientific process to educational research to point out that, like science, "educational researchers are attempting to describe and measure capricious, discontinuous and not easily controlled experiences" (p. 16).

Among other conclusions, she says that, "the conception of science and scientific rigor which dominates the area of educational research, and which was borrowed from the field of psychology, is overly constrained by the adoption of narrow methods and limited use of the mathematics of probability" (p. 17). She wants readers to expand our understanding of educational research.

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

Ann writes directly for educational technology researchers who try to expand their understandings of educational technology and for scholars of diverse backgrounds, interests, and disciplines. Readers are treated reasonably. Again, students are not a direct audience.

She attends to the best interests of research participants generally by arguing for a research approach that is more inclusive of and context-bound to people's lives.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology. The writing style is the same expository/academic form used previously.

To the extent that she wants researchers to be more inclusive and contextual, she is closer to readers and research participants. For the first time, a bit of affect appears—when she says readers should remain "oppositional" not only in terms of conventional educational research but (she implies) in all education work. The argument to broaden research paradigms is much like the last piece reviewed here, though this piece is even more basic in that it gets at a philosophic/rational basis for post-structural research.

• "A Grammar of Educational Television" (1991)

1. What is the work about, and what are her intent and methodology?

This piece explains a way of analyzing how students read educational television and make meaning from it. The theory section of the chapter "borrows concepts from semiotics and suggests a grammatical analysis of television. Such an analysis would describe units of television construction such as frame, shot and sequence, along syntagmatic as well as paradigmatic lines" (p. 255). "In conjunction with syntactical analysis which examines the actual relationships among the categories of construction, paradigmatic analysis…would provide a description of the potential relationships between and among the units of television construction" (p. 256). She then shows how semiotics has been "the most thorough and promising description of the language of media" (p. 257) and applies the description to TV, ETV, and ITV.

She then proposes a model for the method, procedures, and data analyses of the grammar of television. A panel of experts views a program several times, generates focus questions, and identifies program formats. Program segments which are part of the format are identified, the experts record segment structures, and then they run a reliability check on these data. Then data are appraised for program segment patterns. Borrowed codes are noted and traced. Social/cultural origins of the codes are traced, and the social/cultural content and meanings are examined.

She wants to give researchers a way to include social/cultural issues when studying instructional media because often researchers have abdicated their responsibility to do so (p. 276).

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

This work is written for an audience of educational researchers and theorists. She treats readers very reasonably. Here, too, she does not speak directly to students (or to teachers).

Not all Ann's work exemplifies the qualities of good listening/communication that I am looking for. Some work is just expository. This work only very narrowly explicates how students, professors, or other academics do or can communicate/hear one another well! Ann has the teachers' and students' best interest at heart ultimately, but this piece approaches them from a distance.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology. "A Grammar of Educational Television" is very theoretical. The goal of thinking through and proposing a model by which educational television might better be understood is very lofty, given that few have suggested such a thing. But of the works reviewed, this is the one in which she is most distant from the people I suspect she is trying most to help or teach, i.e., learners.

• Square One Television and Gender (with Alejandra Elenes. 1991)

1. What is the work about, and what are her (and any co-author's) intent and methodology?

The authors analyze a children's TV program that generally is accepted as positive because it intends to teach what many of us agree is needed--math skills. The authors use a form of post structural reader theory called "reception theory" to understand *SOTV* in terms of sexism and racism.

They describe *SOTV* as "the quintiessential [sic] post modern children's program, since it employs the latest TV technology to create fractured narratives and messages which, in turn, fragment the subject positions of the viewers" (p. 7). Multiple and fast changing formats are used to gain the children's attention about math.

Unfortunately, the children are also being taught, "how a 12- or 13-year-old boy and girl should act, dress and speak in sexual [even pornographic] fashion" (p. 18). Children are taught that people with non-American accents are to be parodied (p. 19). *SOTV* signals a return to racism, albeit a subtler form of racism (p. 20). Children are subjected to this sexism and racism in 20-40 percent of all *SOTV* programs.

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

This work directly addresses attendees of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology; though any reader would likely get the feeling Ann and Alejandra are primarily talking to the people at the Children's Television Workshop (who produce and design *SOTV*), directing them to change their programming. Ostensibly, though, the piece is written for educational technologists, researchers, and designers. These audiences are treated reasonably, and they are addressed directly and strongly. Ann and Alejandra do not directly address the recipients (children) of this programming that is shot-through with racism and sexism, though we know it is for the children that they are exposing the program biases.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann (and Alejandra) remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology.

This work is a cultural critique, and the authors are able to show us the full range of what children learn from this program. Further, the tone and affect of this piece are bolder than in any work so far. It has a strong, good moral tone because it involves children and it is written with a strength of belief. What is notable, given what I set out to look for in Ann's work, is when she says that her "analysis of *SOTV* is...designed to investigate the way viewers make *sense* of and learn from *Sesame Street* and *SOTV*" (page 10) (emphasis added). The idea of "sense" indicates she wants people, especially children, to understand by more than just rational means. She wants people to understand TV more completely by using a sense of cultural.

• "Reading Educational Computer Programs" (in Muffoletto & Knupfer, 1993)

1. What is the work about, and what are her intent and methodology?

Here, Ann uses reader theory again to look at how a computer program "makes its users a subject of and subjected to particular discourses and their concomitant values and knowledge structures" (p. 181). Reception theory sees knowledge as a social construct, and in doing so, "it can uncover the manner in which cultural messages are enfolded in the rhetoric of...an educational computer program" (p. 182). The theory allows Ann "to consider the relationships among user, program, and producer..." (p. 82). With this theory, Ann sets out to uncover cultural messages in *Where in the World is Carmen San Diego* (*WWCSD*), the computer game.

She concludes that people are diminished by some computer programs because the programs treat them as logical problems-solvers who value immediate feedback, efficiency, and productivity, who are not frustrated by lack of spontaneity and who are mechanized subjects. At the same time computer users are people who must participate in larger social discourses of computing whose participants produce and are embedded in "a range of aesthetic, moral, and political value judgments...produced and regulated by the language of the participants"(p. 183). Critically, she notes that a person in this discourse "may be totally unaware of the constructed nature of these value judgments and may believe them to be natural or self-evident" (p. 183).

Further, *WWCSD* itself

> provides an invitation to users to participate in a rational-logical discourse that is conflated with discourses of sexism and racism. It addresses students of any race or gender in a disrespectful manner. Young girls are not only invited to perceive themselves as objects, but also because this game is sanctioned as an "educational" imprimatur, they are encouraged to believe that this perception is appropriate. Boys fare little better, for the program empowers them in chauvinistic ways which will serve them poorly in their daily lives....People of color are ignored in the old versions and trivialized in the 1991 version. This treatment means that the majority of the California school population is eased out of subjectivity, unless people of color care to participate in a racist discourse" (p. 191).

In order to subvert these conditions, and being able to find only one good example of alternative instructional software, Ann suggests these guidelines:

- place the technology in the hands of subjects of alternative discourses whose rhetoric includes goals of equity and personal freedom
- place the technology in the hands of ethnic groups and allow them to represent their thinking and behavior in an authentic manner
- place the technology in the hands of women for the purposes of creating cooperative software (p. 195).

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

The audience for this work appears to be educational technologists and academics generally and, perhaps, computer program designers, all of whom she treats reasonably. Those whom the programming is about and for—learners—are treated with respect. Learners themselves, recipients of the critique and anything resulting from it, are not addressed directly. Obviously, though, Ann urges that producers of computer programs should alter their programming so that users are treated as people who not only value efficiency and the like but who also are spontaneous and participate in a larger social context of aesthetics, morals, and judgments. In this fuller treatment, Ann is respectful of learners/users.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology. In this piece, she is speaking whole-heartedly about the relations of educational computing and its production of sexism, racism, objectification, over-rationalization. She urges greater self-determination, freedom, and democracy in technology uses, especially for children and women. She is more obviously subversive of biased educational thinking and materials than in any other work so far.

• "Reading the Ads: The Bacchanalian Adolescence" (De Vaney, 1994)

1. What is the work about, and what are her intent and methodology?

Ann uses reader theory again to analyze Channel One ads from 1990 and 1992. She asks, "How do these ads construct their subjects or position their viewers? In other words, just whom do these ads think their viewers are?" (p. 139)

She concludes that the ads borrow from commercial TV forms. They are postmodern in that they feature "fractured narratives, fragmented images, heightened use of jump cuts, excessive use of dancing and singing, and startling juxtaposition of images" (p. 145). The people in the ads are almost totally white, beautiful, and sexual. The ads focus on pleasure, and "no labor is depicted" (p. 146).

She does not want to suggest that teens always use the images in Channel One commercials as guidelines for living, but she does suggest that "if Hollywood and commercial television and classroom TV present only a Bacchanalian adolescence, then these images may assist teens in the construction of adolescence as primarily a party" (p. 147). In these ways, the ads are irresponsible (p. 151).

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

The primary audience appears to be academics/researchers, though she seems also to writing directly to Chris Whittle and Whittle Communication--or to anyone trying to influence the culture and commerce. She treats the audience reasonably. Partly because of where it appears, in a text available mostly to people in higher education, she is not writing directly to teachers or students. However, we can see in the dedication in whom she is most interested: "With respect and love for the thousands of elementary and secondary students we have taught."

Ironically, if teachers in the primary audience take this piece and/or its ideas to their own students, who are not the primary intended readers, the piece may have more effect than if the commercial interests read it. Students may change, whereas commercial interests aren't.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology. She still is trying to change the way media, in this case school/media advertising, produce and/or influence younger learners/viewers/users while ignoring minority groups and women. Though not as strongly, the sense of urgency felt in Square One Television and Gender in this piece, too.

• "Voices of the Founders: Early Discourses in Educational Technology" (with Rebecca P. Butler. In Jonassen, 1996)

1. What is the work about, and what are her (and any co-author's) intent and methodology?

In this work, De Vaney (and Butler) derives meaning from audiotapes and written text of the founders of the field of educational technology. She uses reader theory and neo-theoretical analysis to talk about the voices and texts in the "amorphous field" of educational technology/audiovisual instruction in roughly the first half of the 20th century in America.

She concludes, among other things, that "The rhetoric of the founders and those who follow indicate that the basis of this field will always be hardware, with its concomitant marketplace and governmental interests. If we turn away from this, our voices will remain within the academy. We will be talking to ourselves. Whatever tempering influence we could have had will be lost" (p. 38).

She devotes quite a bit of attention to women in the field, and concludes that "Although women in educational technology became more prominent [in the decades after WWII], the placement of women in this field is still uneven today.... today, women continue working towards equal recognition, opportunity, and responsibility within educational technology" (p. 43).

She speaks directly to a democracy and communication when she points out that the field today "gathered a berth in the academy with the discourses represented in World War II research, operant conditioning, and military training…Perhaps the audiovisual educators…noted the efficiency and effectiveness of military pedagogy operating particularly in the service of democracy, and where convinced that education should proceed down the same road" (p. 38).

She hears the people involved in the formation of the field and speaks of the ups and downs *of the valorization of humanistic discourses* and *democracy* and *the common person* associated the field of educational technology. She allows the voices of the founders to be heard. She speaks of the human condition and "One of the things that was valued in WWII was the preservation of democracy, and many projects were conflated with that desire. Unfortunately, the methods for accomplishing that preservation at that moment in time were undemocratic, i.e., hierarchical and militaristic" (p. 38). She also notes that democratic ideas of the founders included a "model of action" (p. 38) whereby they got all sorts of work *done*.

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

This piece is directly for researchers, faculty, and students in educational technology. Ann favors women in these groups getting more prominence in the field and working toward more recognition, opportunity, and responsibility. She literally listens quite closely—and well--to the founders. Readers and audiences are treated reasonably and respectfully. In this work, she and Becky Butler give others voice by writing about others and by speaking for women, founders, democracy, freedom, and equality.

Though we know Ann cares about them, here too, she does not directly speak to students.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to people's interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology and the places of women and minorities. In terms of its methodology, attention to women in the field, and relations to societal-cultural issues, this is an unusual history of the field. Readers can see the importance of connections with politics, hardware, and prior economic issues. She displays a great deal of fairness toward "fathers" in the field of educational technology; she realizes the culture in which the founders existed and how that affected them and the profession.

• "Can and Need Educational Technology Become a Postmodern Enterprise?" (1998)

1. What is the work about, and what are her intent and methodology?

This piece takes a pointed look at historical, hegemonic features of educational philosophy: "European [sic] and Americans writing about democracy also voiced their values and views of humans while calling for equality for everyone. Yet, their epistemological assumptions sketched the human as a rational/logical entity that actually reflected the person of European male. Thinking they were acultural, as educational psychologists and technologists thought they were acultural, these writers called for equality for the white male…. The postmodern critique of subjectivity uncovers this fallacy" (p. 78). De Vaney describes the development of educational technology as a modern project, with its belief in progress, profits, patriotism, machines, and human equity. So, educational technologists often have exhibited a lack of caring about gender, power, race, and human equity. Effects of modernity in education include the commodification of students and, at best, an interesting construction of subjectivity. Learners became classroom capital to be sold to commercial enterprises. Learners became mental models stripped of social and cultural dimensions; notions of human diversity were constrained.

Today, many people in the field of educational technology resist the unavoidable changes brought on by a postmodern position. Postmodernists study race, gender, ethnicity, and power relations. They are skeptics who often attack/deconstruct modernity and the beliefs in which educational technology is embedded. They often deconstruct by examining discourse. Teachers/technologists are unaware of the ways in which their discourses are not only created by them but enslave them to narrow views of human diversity.

However, Ann says, "postmodern discussions of subjectivity allow teachers to discern how students are constructed by instructional media and software" (p. 77). She says that,

> Alternatively, videos and software must not only picture girls and children of color but also provide respectful representations of diverse groups. If in a video a credible Muslim boy is presented with respect and given agency, there would then be room for the formation of a new subjectivity in the classroom. Knowledge about subjectivity allows teachers to resist subtly stereotypic constructions as well as to recognize when equitable representations and those with agency come along (p. 77).

She is interested in resisting the commodification of students and the capitalization of classrooms. Postmodernist positions help teachers to resist. She is interested in respect for people.

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

She speaks directly to the readers of Theory Into Practice. The readership includes teachers and teacher educators. These audiences are treated reasonably. She also treats readers as people with agency, as she encourages them to resist problematic discourses/media. She listens and speaks to teachers and tries to help them. She respects them in this discourse. Once more, she does not speak directly to students, though we know that ultimately it is they as well as their teachers for whom she is writing.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to peoples' interests over time?

The topic is different, though Ann remains concerned with helping and improving the field of educational technology. In the greatest detail so far, she addresses distinctions between modern and postmodern and how they relate to cultural considerations in education, educational media, classroom practices, teachers, and formation of student subjectivities. She is interested in resisting the objectifying and commodifying of students so that they may develop greater agency and self. She notes again that resistance is needed—resistance by teachers and, one suspects, resistance by students.

Results

The following general answers to the guiding questions emerge from the analysis of the ten written works studied.

1. What is the work about, and what are her intent and methodology?

Dr. De Vaney writes about ten different topics in the field of educational technology, topics which include aptitude-treatment-interaction and media, teaching critical responses to photographs, a field shift to post-structural and reader reception theories, rules that constitute knowing in the field, how to read the structures of educational television, sexism and racism in ETV programming, the diminishing of children by TV programs, degradation of the subject by TV ads, a post-structural history reading of the field and the struggle by women in that field, and the need for a postmodern philosophy of educational technology. In general, the work is about laudable goals: human education, equality, and voice.

She often uses her writing to improve and/or defend the lives of learners. She intends to teach those in educational technology that they/we should be interested in more culturally relevant forms of work that may resist the diminishing of learners that older forms often promote. She is especially concerned with improving the lives of women and minorities. She wants to subvert the conventional paradigms of educational technology field. She wants to make our work more supportive of democracy.

Her research methodology broadens quickly in her career to sociological/cultural models of research. In most of her works, she uses qualitative, post-structural (often, reader reception theory), and inductive forms to examine the topics. She uses expository writing to report her findings. I mean "expository" to be the use of precise and logical written statements and explanations.

2. Who is her audience, and how does she attend to the interests of those she addresses?

In many of the works examined here, the primary audience is AECT convention goers: researchers, professors, graduate students, and perhaps some school media specialists. Otherwise, her audience is educational technology researchers, theorists, and academics generally. She speaks to women and minorities related to these fields. She speaks to Chris Whittle of Channel One and the Edison Project and to designers and producers at Children's Television Workshop and SOTV. Only occasionally do teachers appear to be the intended audience. She virtually never directly addresses students in her work—except as participants in studies.

All readers are treated reasonably and respectfully—even those who would use technology to diminish learners. Even when her writing approaches ire toward these diminishers, she is reasonable and respectful. Most significantly from the point of view of communicating/listening/responding, Ann's work strives (though indirectly in some cases) to give people (researchers, women, teachers, students, readers generally) greater voice, agency, and knowledge. She is dedicated to gaining greater voice, freedom, democracy, and respect for many people.

3. What changes in her work and in her attention to peoples' interests over time?

Of course, the specific topics of her works change from writing to writing, though they stay within the field of educational technology. After a very short time, her work is more foundational and philosophic in that it seeks wisdom as it deals with very basic issues. The pieces get stronger--especially when she talks about youngsters--and address democracy, freedom, respect, and voice. The work is somewhat more subversive over time; it asks readers to resist convention and change the cultural makeup of the field.

Discussion

Ironically, to well and fully carry out an investigation such as the present one, I should have given her more voice; I should have spoken directly with Dr. De Vaney about these questions and issues. As she says, "Meaning or understanding is generated by the learner not controlled by the technology [written word] or its designer" (p. 6).

In terms of the listening I have been looking for, Ann's writing is sometimes a very collaborative process in which she works directly with other authors (e.g., Muffelotto, Elenes, and Butler, herein). To this basic extent, she communicates well.

But from within her work, too, she carries on a conversation or, to use her language, a "discourse" with many people. Discourse is not a concept constrained to oral or even written language. As De Vaney and Butler (1996) say, "We consider discourses...to be texts 'writ large'(p. 5) "...discourses are invisible systems of thought" (p. 5).

It is clear in her works that Ann respectful and careful of learners; I refer you to the dedication she makes in Watching Channel One: *With respect and love for the thousands of elementary and secondary students we have taught.* This is evidence that she is concerned with learners' best interests and that, in this way, she is carrying on a good discourse with them.

Her discourses with students and educational technology broaden and deepen over time; at least if we look at the first and last works studied here. The dissertation is very empirical and rather narrowly focused, but the last piece, "Can and Need Educational Technology Become a Postmodern Enterprise?" is sweeping in scope and concerned with very basic issues of human education.

Ann's work encourages the possibility of school democracy and, therefore, I believe, true school reform. Remember, she says,

- place the technology in the hands of subjects of alternative discourses whose rhetoric includes goals of equity and personal freedom
- place the technology in the hands of ethnic groups and allow them to represent their thinking and behavior in an authentic manner
- place the technology in the hands of women for the purposes of creating cooperative software (1993, p. 195).

This concern with democracy and local control of technology is evidence of her attending to and having good discourse with people. It is also unusual in that, as far as I can see, virtually no democratic schooling takes place in America.

Her work attempts to be fair, which is an attribute I would claim is essential for good discourse. In her attention to and sensibilities for helping children, women, and minorities, she cannot be accused of being unfair to males—as is evidenced by her treatment of the founders who may have made some questionable choices when they invested in technology, given its bent toward the undemocratic (De Vaney and Butler, 1996).

With this concern for what democracy can and should be, Ann keeps a sense of a good future in mind without negating or forgetting the past. This, among other attributes, makes her writing moral, which is another attribute of good discourse/conversation.

Her work is a reliable, valid analysis of educational technology in one form or another, as evidenced partly by her successful career and, mostly, by her own "rules of evidence."

So, the quality of attending to my thoughts that I first noticed in Ann is present in her written work, too. However, I do not want to give the impression that I agree with everything she says. For example, I am not sure that too many postmodernists and modernists are too polemical, as she says in "Can and Need Educational Technology Become a Postmodern Enterprise?" Sometimes an argumentative appeal can bring democracy more quickly than a more purely reasonable appeal.

My only major question about her scholarship is that she virtually never directly speaks to the students (and sometimes the teachers) for whom she writes! If Ann were a better communicator, wouldn't she also have spoken or written directly to learners more than she has? Wouldn't she have used a more direct, inclusive assessment of people's comprehension of poetic metaphor or teachers' need to resist commodification?

Conclusion

Those of us in educational technology would do well to consider following the paths she has gone down, be they her research topics, methodologies, and philosophies; be they the people about whom she is interested; or be they the ethical stance she takes.

I will say that examining her work has made me realize that I virtually never do my work directly *for* students—which now seems to me to be a very serious error. Writing for and speaking to academics--including

teachers, principals, media specialists, and professors—is not likely to do any good for students in schools. Of course almost no one writes or speaks for learners. But I know of almost no professors who write directly to students of any age to encourage them to work toward self-voice, agency, democracy or even learning! Maybe we should write books (or whatever) for students so that they will understand and make decisions about educational technology for themselves instead of being told what to do all the time!

It is clear that in her written work Ann is doing well at working toward understanding how people communicate, how they make meaning with one another. However, throughout this paper I have been uncertain about what I mean by Ann's ability to listen or communicate. My shifting use of terms indicates my uncertainty. Perhaps I can be clearest if I tell you that my examination of her written work leads me to conclude, mostly, that Ann is very good at carrying on the kind of good conversation Jane Roland Martin describes:

> A good conversation is neither a fight nor a contest. Circular in form, cooperative in manner, and constructive in intent, it is an interchange of ideas by those who see themselves not as adversaries but as human beings come together to talk and listen and learn from one another.

People have a lot to learn from Ann.

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